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Two evaluators report on the independent study experiment at Bard College during 1958-59. Presents student and faculty attitudes toward the experiment, results of the independent study as measured by grades, and conclusions and recommendations. Evaluation indicates that the achievements of freshmen, sophomores, and juniors in the 1958-59 offcampus study experiment compare favorably with oncampus activities, and that nothing in the results of the experiment showed that freshmen are any less able to do independent study offcampus than are sophomores. Handicaps in administering the program were a lack of pilot courses, study materials, and a sufficient number of academically related work projects. In addition, the faculty was overloaded seriously with the supervision of an overwhelming number of individual conference courses.							
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Reporter #4

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EVALUATION OF AN EXPERIMENT IN

OFF-CAMPUS INDEPENDENT STUDY

at BARD COLLEGE

1959-60.

? 1958-59
(see page 3.)

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE
Office of Education

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With the aid of a grant from the Fund for the
Advancement of Education

Evaluators

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the Faculty, Antioch College

and

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Conclusions and
Recommendations
appear on pages 27 and 28.

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Section 1

Historical Preamble

On July 6, 1958, Bard College announced receipt of a grant from the Fund for the Advancement of Education for the purpose of conducting an experimental academic pilot project in the academic year 1958-59. The purpose of the project was to determine:

- (1) whether Bard students could study independently off campus and maintain Bard academic standards;
- and
- (2) whether Bard should adopt a proposed four-quarter calendar requiring off-campus independent study.

As envisioned by Bard and described in the July 6, 1958, press release, the proposed four quarter plan would have the following effects:

1. Keep the college plant in operation 12 months a year.
2. Permit the college to accommodate about twice as many resident students as its facilities would otherwise allow;
3. Increase the number of students taught by each faculty member by one-third without materially altering the system of seminars, tutorials and individual conference courses that has distinguished the Bard program for the last quarter of a century;
4. Permit able students to complete their college requirements in three years instead of four; and
5. Require independent academic work while students are not in residence.

The press statement continued:

So far as the division of the academic calendar into quarters instead of semesters is concerned, there is nothing either new or experimental, President Case said, pointing to the scores of prominent institutions in the Middle West that use such an arrangement. The requirement of independent academic work outside the resident terms, however, has never been characteristic of the American collegiate program. Although new to this country, it is a familiar feature of the English universities as "the long vac," when a substantial portion of the year's work is done.

There are many difficulties and dangers, however, in moving toward these goals without ample time for considering and solving practical questions relating to course sequences, faculty teaching patterns and student residence patterns. The Bard faculty has therefore decided to spend the better part of a year in further study and in close observation of the Pilot Project before making any commitment. In May, 1959, there will be a comprehensive evaluation of the experiment. If it is decided at that time to proceed with the Bard four-quarter system, it will be inaugurated in September, 1960, leaving more than a year to allow future students and school advisors to become fully acquainted with it. The intervening year, 1959-1960, would in this event continue the Pilot Project with such modifications or additional experimental features as the faculty deem desirable.

During the trial period the Pilot Project will have no effect on the college calendar. It will, however, introduce independent work for academic credit during the non-resident term in January and February. This requirement effects a change in Bard's annual Field Period, which has heretofore been used almost exclusively for job experience. While three successful Field Periods have been required for graduation, no academic credit has formerly been allowed for the work done.

Under the terms of the Pilot Project a student must earn from 2 to 4 academic credits by independent work in the non-resident term.

Seniors will accomplish this by doing the basic research in preparation for their Senior Project or in actually writing the Senior Project. Sophomores will have special assignments designed to prepare them for the Moderation, or Sophomore Review, required for promotion to the Upper College. All other students will be offered a number of alternatives by which they can earn the required credits. These include:

1. A significant assignment that follows a specially designed first-semester course (a "trailer" course) or is sandwiched between the two semesters of a specially designed year course (a "sandwich" course);
2. A specially assigned individual project designed to fill a particular student's academic needs;
3. A work experience plus either 1. or 2.; and
4. A special work experience evaluated in advance as possessing special academic merit. A student who elects the 4th option must make an extensive report to his Division to supplement the work experience.

Section 2

Evaluators' Functions and Responsibilities

In August, 1958, Bard arranged with the undersigned, Alonso F. Myers and W. Boyd Alexander, to serve as evaluators of the independent study experiment during 1958-59. It was agreed that in addition to their evaluative functions they would act as consultants on the operation of the experiment and, in a minor way, on other aspects of the total project.

The evaluators made six visits to the campus from September to May. Each evaluator was present on campus 18 days. In addition to three days working jointly at Maple Springs, New York, on the final report, each devoted several days to study and analysis at home.

On each visit the evaluators met with the Faculty Committee on Academic Reorganization (COAR) and on most visits with the full faculty. The evaluators met several times with the Student Committee on Educational Policy. They also met with the faculties of the four divisions: Arts, Literature, Science, Social Studies.

The September visit was devoted largely to interviewing administrators, faculty, and students to get a clear understanding of the purpose and design of the independent study experiment and the attitudes toward it of all concerned. The evaluators encouraged the faculty to move promptly and vigorously in development of the projected pilot courses.

During the October visit the evaluators, with the assistance of Professor Frank Oja of the Bard faculty, developed a questionnaire designed to determine student attitudes toward and expectations from the independent study experiment before undertaking it. There were individual and group conferences with faculty on the design and organization of independent study pilot courses and conference projects, including work projects for academic credit. There were discussions with faculty regarding the desirability of making pilot courses available to all freshmen. The decision of the faculty of the Common Course, required of all freshmen, not to provide an independent study experience associated with this course, presented a serious problem. This somewhat unexpected decision resulted in a paucity of organized pilot courses for freshmen and made it necessary for the faculty to plan for individualized conference projects with a majority of the students, including more than three-fourths of the freshmen. Formidable, indeed, were the tasks to be accomplished in the six weeks remaining in the fall quarter. After the Christmas holiday the students were to begin their field periods and independent study.

During the December visit there were discussions with faculty and with student leaders regarding standards for evaluating academic achievement in independent study projects. Although a minority of faculty members favored a policy of "leniency," it was agreed that campus academic

standards should prevail. During the visit the evaluators prepared separate questionnaires for faculty and students to obtain their evaluations of off-campus independent study. These questionnaires were to be completed as soon as practicable after college reconvened following the field period. The post-field period questionnaire for the students paralleled the pre-field period questionnaire.

A six-day visit in March was devoted largely to analysis of the questionnaires and to interviews with about a dozen of the faculty members who had significant numbers of students engaged in independent study. The evaluators attended divisional meetings of students and faculty organized by the Student Educational Policies Committee. The purpose of the meetings was to get first-hand student reactions to their off-campus independent study experiences. Faculty members and the evaluators were present as observers. The Student Educational Policies Committee had prepared a list of questions to guide discussion in the meetings. At the end of the March visit the evaluators submitted to the Committee on Academic Reorganization some tentative conclusions and recommendations. (See Appendix A.) At this time a large number of student questionnaires had not been returned.

The last visit to the campus, in May, was devoted largely to further analysis of questionnaire data, to analysis of grades given by faculty for off-campus independent study, and to comparison of these grades with grades given for campus study. The evaluators met with the Committee on Academic Reorganization for the purpose of presenting their major conclusions and recommendations. At a meeting of the entire faculty later in the day the evaluators presented their major conclusions and recommendations. At this same meeting the Committee on Academic Reorganization presented its proposals for a new calendar and program to go into effect in the academic year 1959-60, and these proposals, the first of which accepted the evaluators' recommendation on independent study, were adopted.

Section 3

Student Attitudes toward Independent Study before Undertaking It

When plans were announced by Bard College in the spring of 1958 for an experimental independent study project to be undertaken during the field period 1958-59, with a view to the possible adoption in 1960-61 of a four-quarter plan, there quickly developed bitter opposition to the proposal within the student body. Protest meetings were held for the purpose of developing and solidifying student opposition.

A questionnaire, designed to test student opinion with regard to the proposed four-quarter plan and the experimental off-campus independent study project, was developed by a committee of students and circulated to the student body. There were 108 of these questionnaires returned, representing slightly less than one-half of the student body. Student reactions as recorded on the questionnaire were highly unfavorable, both to the off-campus independent study proposal and to the idea of a four-quarter plan for Bard. For example, to the question

"If you were to choose a college, would you choose a college with such a 4-Quarter plan (which includes one quarter of independent study at home)?"

YES - 3

NO - 98

To the question

"If you had to work independently for a semester, would you rather work at home or at Bard?"

BARD - 92

HOME - 6

To the question

"Do you feel that isolation from an academic community will hinder your work?"

YES - 100

NO - 3

When the evaluators arrived at the Bard campus on September 17, 1958, for the first visit, there was clear indication of highly organized, vocal, and bitter opposition to either the experimental off-campus independent study project or the proposed four-quarter plan. It was not clear to what extent these attitudes were representative of the student body as a whole. It seemed important to ascertain the attitudes of the students and especially of the freshmen, since they had not been subjected to the organized propaganda effort in opposition to the proposals that had been carried on in the spring of 1958.

During their visit to the Bard campus in October, 1958, the evaluators, with the valuable help of Professor Frank Oja, developed a questionnaire to be completed by students and designed to determine their attitudes toward the experimental off-campus independent study project shortly before embarking on it.

Reactions were sought from freshmen, sophomores, and juniors. Seniors were not included because their independent study assignment--the Senior Project--was of quite a different nature from those to be undertaken by the other classes. There was the further fact that faculty evaluation of senior projects would not be completed until late in the academic year and thus could not be taken into account in the evaluation of the experimental off-campus independent study project.

A rather detailed report and analysis of the questionnaires turned in by Bard students in December, 1958, is included as Appendix C of this report. Some of the most significant findings resulting from the analysis of the questionnaires are reported here.

(1) FRESHMEN vs. UPPERCLASSMEN:

The freshmen were markedly more favorable in their expressed attitudes toward the experimental off-campus independent study project than were the sophomores and the juniors.

Comparison in terms of liking or disliking

80 per cent of the freshmen expected either to like very much or to like the independent study project.

16+ per cent expressed themselves as neutral.

3+ expected to dislike it.

Among the sophomores, only

50 per cent expected either to like it very much or to like it.

Among the juniors, only

47 per cent expected either to like it very much or to like it.

Comparison in terms of anticipated value

79 per cent of the freshmen anticipated that the independent study project would be either more valuable than or about equal in value to a classroom course.

Among the sophomores, only

54 per cent anticipated that independent study would be either more valuable than or about equal to a classroom course.

Among the juniors,
72 per cent anticipated that independent study would be either more valuable than or about equal to a classroom course.

Why did the freshmen express markedly greater liking for the prospect of entering upon the independent study project than did the sophomores and slightly more than the juniors?

It appears probable that the freshmen, being newly arrived on the campus in September, 1958, had not been indoctrinated against the project as had those students who were on campus in the spring of 1958. It may also be true that freshmen are generally more favorably disposed toward innovations than are upperclassmen.

Still another plausible explanation of the difference in attitudes is that the freshmen had not been on campus long enough to become as satisfied with Bard as were the upperclassmen.

Many of the comments written in by the sophomores and the juniors stated a deep aversion to the idea of being under the necessity of studying at home during the field period. One or two years of living away from home apparently had quite thoroughly emancipated the upperclassmen from home ties. The freshmen, on the other hand, appeared to be less apprehensive over the baneful effects of having to live and study at home for several weeks.

(2) CHANGE IN ATTITUDES OF SOPHOMORES AND JUNIORS BETWEEN SPRING OF 1958 AND DECEMBER, 1958.

The "Student Opinion" questionnaire submitted by a committee of students in the spring of 1958 showed an overwhelming opposition to the idea of off-campus independent study. The preponderance of expressed opposition to off-campus independent study as reported in the student opinion questionnaire ranges from about 15 to 1 to better than 20 to 1. Even allowing for the somewhat loaded nature of the questions, the magnitude of the opposition is impressive.

The analysis of student questionnaires filled out in December, 1958, shows a sharp reversal from the results recorded in the student opinion questionnaire in the spring of 1958. Leaving out of account the freshman questionnaires submitted in December, 1958, since the freshmen were not at Bard in the spring of 1958, the analysis of questionnaires filled out by sophomores and juniors in December, 1958, shows a sharp reversal from the spring of 1958 student opinion survey.

Fifty per cent of the sophomores stated that they either like very much or like the independent study project on which they were about to engage. An additional 20 per cent of the sophomores stated that they were neutral, leaving only 30 per cent stating that they disliked it or were undecided.

Among the juniors, the reactions were not greatly different from those recorded by the sophomores: 47 per cent of the juniors said that they either liked very much or liked the independent study projects on which they were about to engage; 31+ per cent said they were neutral, leaving only 21 per cent who said they disliked it.

On the important matter of anticipated value of the off-campus independent study project as a learning experience, 54 per cent of the sophomores believed the independent study project would be either more valuable or about on a par with a classroom course.

Among the juniors, 72 per cent believed the independent study project would be either more valuable than or about on a par with a classroom course.

Why did this sharp reversal from the student opinions expressed in the spring of 1958 occur? It appears probable that the opportunity to think about this matter during the summer, with an absence of an emotionalized propagandistic effort to discredit the entire proposal, may have resulted in considerable independent thinking about independent study.

Contributing to the reversal in all probability was a change in the situation with regard to the independent study project between spring and fall of 1958. In the spring students were being urged to exert every effort to defeat the proposal. When they returned to the campus in September it was clear that there would be an experimental off-campus independent study project during the field period and that all students would be required to participate in it. Attention now shifted from the effort to defeat the proposal to consideration by the individual as to what particular project he should undertake and what values there might be for him. Some students now saw certain merits in the idea. Some, after consultation with their advisers, became aware of challenging opportunities for a different kind of academic experience and saw an opportunity to prove their ability to study independently.

Section 4

Faculty Attitudes toward Independent Study in the Fall of 1958 before Field Period

The evaluators ascertained faculty opinion by means of (1) meetings with the Committee on Academic Reorganization, (2) divisional meetings, (3) discussion with the dean, and (4) informal interviews and casual contacts with individual faculty members.

Faculty attitudes toward off-campus independent study were subordinate to their attitudes toward the proposed four-quarter calendar. Most faculty members liked the existing Bard calendar with its eight-week winter interlude (two weeks Christmas vacation plus six weeks field period for students), and viewed with more or less dislike the possibility of losing their winter period for recreation, study and travel. Several said that this feature of the Bard program was the most attractive one for them. In discussion with faculty of their views, attitudes, suggestions and predictions about the off-campus independent study experiment, many tended to regard it with reserve because, if adjudged successful, the consequence would be the adoption of the four-quarter plan. Several said that, if they became convinced that the adoption of the four-quarter plan was necessary for Bard's survival, they would vote for it but would probably seek to leave Bard soon afterward.

Unfamiliarity with quarter plans of any sort was quite general and seemed to play some part in the negative attitudes. The semester plan, almost universally used in the eastern part of the country, was regarded as proved in practice and soundly grounded on long tradition. Changing pace from a fifteen-week academic period to eleven or twelve weeks presented difficulties of varying degrees to many faculty members.

Much more basic and important, though, in faculty attitudes was the conviction that any plan, whether it might be off-campus independent study or academic credit by achievement examination, would dilute Bard's program of individualized study based on close and frequent student-faculty contacts and would gnaw at the very roots of Bard's unique excellence as an academic institution.

Faculty attitudes toward the values and feasibility of off-campus independent study, insofar as they were separable from the four-quarter plan, reflected both interest and skepticism but little of either enthusiasm or hostility.

The evaluators found little enthusiasm for the independent study idea though a considerable minority of faculty members, mostly those with longer service, was hopeful that the experiment would prove to be academically acceptable.

Deep concern for the survival of the college compelled this wish more than any conviction that independent study would add another valuable dimension to the Bard program. There was little feeling expressed that students would profit by being forced to work on their own for periods of time without frequent faculty assistance and supervision.

However, since it had been decided to proceed with the off-campus independent study experiment, the faculty proposed to give the experiment a fair chance. Much time was spent in the fall, in groups and individually, in designing pilot project courses which originally were supposed to provide independent study opportunities for most of the freshmen and sophomores. When the decision of the Common Course faculty not to enter the experiment required that the great majority of the students, including the freshmen, would need to have planned with them individualized conference courses, a great and unexpected additional load was thrown unequally upon members of the faculty. Planning such projects in numbers, including helping the students to prepare syllabi and bibliographies and devising ways to measure achievement, led faculty members into strange territory. Their after judgment was that in almost all cases they had been able to work out adequate plans with students though the students' judgment was much less positive on that score.

It should be emphasized that a great deal of hard and committed work was done by everyone. But all concerned were necessarily tentative and somewhat doubtful about the design and conduct of the off-campus independent study for the simple reason that they had had no experience with such a program.

Section 5Student Reactions to Independent Study after Field Period

When students returned to the campus for the beginning of the second semester, following the completion of the field period, they were asked to give their reactions to the independent study projects on which they had been engaged and to evaluate their experiences with independent study. A copy of the questionnaire that the students filled out for this purpose is included as Appendix D.

In the post-field period questionnaire, students were asked to record their reaction in terms of liking or disliking their independent study experience. They also were asked to give their evaluation of the independent study projects in which they had engaged in terms of value to them as a learning experience. The following tables summarize student reactions and evaluations on these two items, arranged by classes, and present for comparative purposes the reaction to the same two items before engaging in the independent study projects.

Extent of Liking or Disliking

Analysis of Reactions by Freshman	Pre-Field Period		Post-Field Period	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
Like very much	24	44.44	14	36.84
Like	19	35.19	12	31.58
Neutral	9	16.67	5	13.16
Dislike	2	3.70	7	18.42
Total	54	100.00	38	100.00
Analysis of Reactions by Sophomores	Pre-Field Period		Post-Field Period	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
Like very much	10	22.73	5	19.23
Like	12	27.27	8	30.77
Neutral	9	20.45	6	23.08
Dislike	10	22.73	7	26.92
Undecided	3	6.82	-	-
Total	44	100.00	26	100.00

Analysis of Reactions
by Juniors

	Pre-Field Period		Post-Field Period	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
Like very much	1	5.26	5	16.13
Like	8	42.11	8	25.81
Neutral	6	31.58	7	22.58
Dislike	4	21.05	11	35.48
Total	19	100.00	31	100.00

Analysis of
Reactions
Freshmen, Sophomores, Juniors

	Pre-Field Period		Post-Field Period	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Percent
Like very much	35	29.91	24	25.26
Like	39	33.33	28	29.47
Neutral	24	20.51	18	18.95
Dislike	16	13.68	25	26.32
Undecided	3	2.57	-	-
Total	117	100.00	95	100.00

After completion of the experimental off-campus independent study 54.73 per cent of all students who turned in questionnaires indicated either that they liked very much or that they liked it. This compares with 63.24 per cent who had indicated that they expected to like it very much or to like it. A clear majority had expected to like it and did like it.

Just as there was a decline in the percentage liking the experience with independent study as compared with those who had expected to like it, there was an increase in the percentage disliking it as compared with those who had expected to dislike it (26.32 per cent disliking vs. 13.68 per cent who had expected to dislike it).

In the pre-field period questionnaire returns, 20.51 per cent had declared themselves to be neutral as regards their expectations for liking or disliking the independent study experience. Perhaps to this number there should be added the 2.57 per cent who had indicated that they were undecided. At the end of the experiment 18.95 per cent indicated that they were neutral with regard to liking or disliking their experience with independent study.

Value of Independent Study as a Learning Experience

Analysis of Evaluations by Freshmen	Pre-Field Period		Post-Field Period	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
More valuable than classroom course	15	31.25	10	26.32
About on a par with classroom course	23	47.91	20	52.63
Less value than classroom course	5	10.42	3	7.89
Little value	5	10.42	4	10.53
Waste of Time	0	0	1	2.63
Total	48	100.00	38	100.00

Analysis of Evaluations by Sophomores	Pre-Field Period		Post-Field Period	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
More valuable than classroom course	7	21.21	8	21.05
About on a par with classroom course	11	33.33	11	28.95
Less value than classroom course	2	6.06	15	39.47
Little value	10	30.30	4	10.53
Waste of time	3	9.09	0	0
Total	33	100.00	38	100.00

Analysis of Evaluations by Juniors	Pre-Field Period		Post-Field Period	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
More valuable than classroom course	2	11.11	3	10.71
About on a par with classroom course	11	61.11	9	32.15
Less value than classroom course	0	0	8	28.57
Little value	5	27.78	7	25.00
Waste of time	0	0	1	3.57
Total	18	100.00	28	100.00

Analysis of Evaluations: Freshmen, Sophomores, Juniors	Pre-Field Period		Post-Field Period	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
More valuable than classroom course	24	24.00	21	20.20
About on a par with classroom course	46	46.00	40	38.46
Less value than classroom course	7	7.00	26	25.00
Little value	20	20.00	15	14.42
Waste of time	3	3.00	2	1.92
Total	100	100.00	104	100.00

After completion of their off-campus independent study projects, 58.66 per cent of all students who turned in questionnaires indicated either that the independent study project on which they had been engaged was more valuable than a classroom course or that it was about on a par with a classroom course. This compares with 70 per cent who had indicated either that they expected it to be more valuable than a classroom course or about on a par with a classroom course. On the other hand, only 16.34 per cent found the independent study experience to be either of little value (14.42 per cent) or a waste of time (1.92 per cent). This compares with 23 per cent who indicated that they expected the independent study experience to be either of little value (20 per cent) or a waste of time (3 per cent).

On the basis of the students' own evaluation of their experience in the experimental off-campus independent study project, it is clear that the results were considered to be quite satisfactory. A majority (54.73 per cent) of all students who turned in questionnaires indicated either that they liked very much or liked the independent study experience. Perhaps more significant is the fact that 58.66 per cent judged their independent study experience to have been either more valuable than a classroom course or about on a par with a classroom course.

Freshmen, who from the beginning had viewed the experimental off-campus independent study project more favorably than did the sophomores and the juniors, continued to do so after completing the independent study project. Why this should be so has been a matter of considerable interest to the evaluators as well as to some members of the faculty.

It appears probable that the fact that the freshmen had not been on campus in the spring of 1958, when the entire project was under attack by a good many student leaders, may have been an important consideration. It also seems probable that attitude toward the project in advance may have been an important factor in influencing attitudes toward it when the project was being undertaken.

Some additional facts which students reported are summarized below.

The students reported that about one-third were employed full time in the field period; about one-third part time; and about one third did not have a job.

About five-sixths of them lived at home during the field period.

About two-thirds reported some difficulty with their independent study. The largest number by far complained that it was difficult to study at home. Other difficulties reported in significant numbers were (1) books and readings were hard to obtain, (2) jobs did not allow them enough study time, (3) difficulties were encountered in their study when they needed the help of the instructor.

About one-third of the students reported that they were inadequately prepared to undertake their field study, but few criticized the faculty on this account.

A somewhat general criticism of the field period was that students needed more help to find jobs in the first place and to find jobs appropriate to their interests. Some students who had full-time jobs which interfered with their study--either because of the long hours of work and commuting or because the job was unrelated to their interests--complained that they had to take the particular job because of their need of money.

Section 6Faculty Reactions to Independent Study after Field Period

Faculty reactions were obtained in four ways: (1) by a questionnaire (See Appendix E); (2) by interviews with thirteen faculty members who had significant numbers of students in independent study; (3) by discussions with the Committee on Academic Reorganization; and (4) by discussions with the dean.

Faculty Questionnaire Data

Questionnaires were turned in by thirty-four faculty members:

Arts Division	7
Social Studies Division	12
Science Division	7
Language and Literature Division	8

The total number of teaching faculty members on campus at the time was about 40, so that about 85 per cent returned questionnaires. Most of those who did not make a return had no independent study students.

The faculty returns covered the following classification of students by classes and types of independent study:

Total number in pilot (structured) courses: 70

		<u>Arts</u>	<u>Social Studies</u>	<u>Science</u>	<u>Language & Literature</u>
Freshmen	18	1	9	2	6
Sophomores	37	1	13	1	22
Juniors	<u>15</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>3</u>
	70	4	22	13	31

Total number in Conference Courses: 125

Freshmen	69	20	21		20
Sophomores	31	6	20		0
Juniors	<u>26</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>
	126	32	53	18	23

Total number in Work Projects:

			14		
Freshmen	10	2	5	0	3
Sophomores	4	0	4	0	0
Juniors	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
	14	2	9	0	3

Total number of students reported on by faculty in questionnaires: 210

Freshmen	97
Sophomores	72
Juniors	<u>41</u>
	210

SEE APPENDIX A: Notes to COAR on the Independent Study Experiment-
 "incomplete and tentative"
 by W. Boyd Alexander and Alonso F. Myers,
 evaluators.

A few cases were added later which makes the final figures differ slightly.

The first point to be made here is that only 18 out of 97 freshmen were in organized pilot courses, whereas the original plan had presupposed that most, if not all, freshmen would be in such courses. Only slightly more than half the sophomores, 37 out of 72, were in pilot courses; 15 out of 41 juniors were in pilot courses.

No one had foreseen the possibility that more than 80 per cent of the freshmen and almost half the sophomores would turn up in conference courses. At this juncture the whole venture was in grave danger. The faculty deserves great credit for the way it faced this crisis and buckled down to setting up conference courses for such an overwhelming number of freshmen and sophomores.

Faculty Evaluation of Work as
Compared with Campus Standards

		<u>Superior</u>	<u>Same</u>	<u>Inferior</u>
PILOT COURSES	Arts	2	0	1
	Social Studies	0	10	5
	Science	0	13	0
	Language and Literature	5	14	17
		<u>7</u> +	<u>37</u> =44	<u>23</u>
CONFERENCE COURSES	Arts	3	8	10 (6**)
	Social Studies	0	7	33 (8**)
	Science	6	7	3
	Language and Literature	0	3	24
		<u>9</u> +	<u>25</u> =34	<u>70</u> (14**)
WORK PROJECTS	Arts	0	0	0
	Social Studies	8	1	0
	Science	0	0	0
	Language and Literature	0	2	0
		<u>8</u> +	<u>3</u> =11	<u>0</u>
COMBINED TOTALS		24 +	65=89	93

**only
slightly in-
ferior

The table shows that faculty felt that campus standards of quality were well maintained in the pilot courses with $\frac{1}{4}$ rating quality equal or superior to campus standards against 23 rating it inferior. This constitutes a 2 to 1 vote that campus standards were maintained in organized pilot courses. There were only 18 freshmen compared to 52 sophomores and juniors in these courses.

The big swing to the negative in quality comes in the conference courses where the freshmen were heavily in the majority, 69 versus 56 sophomores and juniors combined. Here the vote is 2 to 1 the other way, i.e., that campus standards were not met. While $\frac{1}{4}$ out of the 70 inferior ratings were accompanied by special notes by faculty that they were only slightly inferior, this fact only slightly mitigates the definitely unfavorable judgment.

(Because several faculty members made a special point of mentioning that certain ratings meant only slightly inferior, the evaluators were at first inclined to split these between equal and inferior, and did so in their March 30 report, but then decided that they would be following a more safely objective course by letting them all stand as inferior.)

The 11 work projects were almost all in Social Studies, and all were rated superior or equal to campus standards in quality of work done.

The total of superior and equal ratings for all projects compared to inferior comes out 89 versus 92, a very slight margin, on the inferior side with no allowance for the $\frac{1}{4}$ qualified inferior ratings. Interpretation of these ratings leads onto shaky ground.

Faculty members usually maintain that they expect only a minority of students to do work inferior to campus standards. If so, then the summation is heavily on the negative side. However, the nearly even vote might be considered to mean that the quality in all types of courses came close to campus standards.

Faculty Evaluation of Quantity of Work
as compared with Campus Standards

Freshmen, Sophomores and Juniors combined.

		<u>More</u>	<u>Equal</u>	<u>Less</u>
PILOT COURSES	Arts	0	2	3
	Social Studies	6	5	4
	Science	0	12	0
	Language and Literature	8	13	16
		<u>14</u> +	<u>32</u> = 46	<u>23</u>
CONFERENCE COURSES	Arts	2	20	6
	Social Studies	4	10	36 (13**)
	Science	1	8	1
	Language and Literature	0	20	25
		<u>7</u> +	<u>58</u> = 65	<u>68</u> (13**)
WORK PROJECTS	Arts	1	0	1
	Social Studies	0	0	0
	Science	0	0	0
	Language and Literature	0	0	0
		<u>1</u> +	<u>0</u> = 1	<u>1</u>
COMBINED TOTALS		22 +	90 = 112	92

**only
slightly less

Faculty judgment on the comparison with campus standards of quantity of work done was 2 to 1 that campus standards were met in the pilot courses and about 1 to 1 that they were met in the individual conference courses. The standard suggested in the questionnaire was 90 hours of work for 2 semester hours. There were several faculty comments to the effect that this was higher than the campus norm. The totals of ratings of more and equal compared to less were 112 versus 92. Included in the latter figure were 13 ratings noted as only slightly less.

Faculty were asked the question, "Did you observe an appreciable difference between the ability of freshmen and sophomores or juniors to do independent work required by the course?"

	Observed an appreciable difference between freshmen vs. sophomores- juniors		Sophomores & Juniors <u>Superior</u>	Fresh- men <u>Superior</u>
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>		
PILOT COURSES	7	27	5	2
CONFERENCE COURSES	45	24	34	6

The faculty noted few differences between freshmen and sophomores-juniors in ability to do independent work in the pilot courses but noted a significant number of differences between them in the conference courses, with the sophomores-juniors rated as superior in a ratio of about 6 to 1. This comparison is worthy of special note and will be referred to in the conclusions and recommendations.

Faculty were asked about both pilot and conference courses whether the requirements were primarily content, critical-analytical, or creative. The replies are tabulated below:

	<u>Content</u>	<u>Critical-Analytical</u>	<u>Creative</u>
Arts	10	3	16
Social Studies	26	24	4
Science	20	5	0
Language & Literature	13	48	0

The critical-analytical courses are heavily in the majority in the Language and Literature Division and are almost equal to the content courses in Social Studies. It is significant that faculty members in these divisions report a large proportion of the conference course performance as inferior in quality.

Faculty Interviews

The evaluators interviewed 13 faculty members. An effort was made to select those who had had larger numbers of students in independent study. Time did not permit covering all of them. Fortunately in several such cases the faculty members had written very full comments on their questionnaires.

The evaluators tried to determine whether and to what extent campus academic standards were maintained in giving grades to students for independent study. There was a split among the faculty on this important point. The majority, about three-fourths, stoutly maintained that they had not shaded their grades. Three faculty members said they had exercised leniency and another who had not done so believed that several others in his division, Social Studies, had done so. One Social Studies faculty member made the firmly blunt statement that he doubted whether any of the grades given for independent study were up to campus standards.

There was general agreement that carefully designed courses with fully worked-out syllabi should be made available to all freshmen and to a majority of sophomores and that it was regrettable that so few pilot courses were available to freshmen.

Also, there was general agreement that content rather than critical-analytical material should have primary emphasis in independent study courses to be done off campus. The teachers were aware of many cases where the students in critical-analytical courses were stuck at a certain point for lack of faculty help. The social studies and literature teachers especially emphasized this point.

There was a difference in opinion, about evenly divided, on the students' ability to do creative work independently. Several faculty members reported excellent results, while others felt the students were lost without their help and criticism.

Several teachers expressed strongly the opinion that students would be able to do better work independently in sandwich or trailer courses where they had some foundation and momentum than in starting on new material.

About half of the teachers expressed themselves as both surprised and gratified by the quality of work their students had been able to do independently. A majority expressed confidence that off-campus independent study could be successful even for the younger student if well organized content courses were made available to them.

Several teachers were impressed by the need for students to learn to work without constant guidance and prodding and could see value to those students, even some who had had difficulties, in the confidence and initiative they had developed in surmounting problems and difficulties by their own efforts.

Teachers emphasized that most of the failure grades they had to give in independent study courses were for cases where the student, for reasons good or ill, did not finish and, in many cases did not even start the work of the course. They knew of a number of cases where illness, home conditions, or demands of the job more or less justified the student's failure to tackle the work. The registrar's office reported to the evaluators that there were only four "earned" F's among the 32 that were given.

Section 7Results of Independent Study as Measured by Grades

The table below shows the distribution of the grades for off-campus independent study by classes and divisions compared with the grades earned on campus by the same students in the fall semester. Previously note was made of the fact that only four students out of the 32 who received F grades (failure) for independent study actually finished the work of the course. No withdrawn or incomplete grades were given. The campus grades for the same students show a considerable number of withdrawn grades which probably were given for some sort of shown cause. No such tempering of the grade-wind was done for the off-campus grades, for the simple reason that the students were not on campus to show cause.

TABLE OF RESULTS OF INDEPENDENT STUDY AS MEASURED BY GRADES

	Pilot Courses					Conference Courses					Work Projects					All Courses					First semester grades for same students					*average grades	
	A B C D F					A B C D F					A B C D F					A B C D F					A B C D F						
	A	B	C	D	F	A	B	C	D	F	A	B	C	D	F	A	B	C	D	F	A	B	C	D	F		
Freshmen																											
Arts	1					1	3	9	5	3	2	1	1			4	10	6	3	4	9	54	55	6	2		
Social Studies	1	1				1	10	4	1	1		3	2	2		4	13	7	1	2	8	35	49	13	8		
Science	1					1	4	4	1	1	1					4	5	1	1	2	10	17	13	2	2		
Language & Literature	1	3				2	1	9	5	1	4		1			1	10	9	1	6	10	53	49	12	7		
	3	5				5	9	32	15	6	8	4	3	3		13	38	23	6	14	37	159	166	33	19	2.39*	
																										2.32*	
Sophomores																											
Arts	3	1				1	2	6	4		2					2	9	5	0	3	5	36	22	5	1		
Social Studies	1	2	2	1		1	9	4	2	2		1	2	2		3	13	8	3	2	13	43	40	8	4		
Science	1						2	1		2						2	2			2	3	13	3	4			
Language & Literature	3	4	2	8								2	3	4	2	8	2	3	4	2	8	10	31	31	7	2	
	9	7	3	9		5	16	8	2	6		1	2	2		9	29	17	5	15	31	123	96	24	7	2.52*	
																										2.16*	
Juniors																											
Arts							3	7	1		2					3	7	1		2	4	27	14	3	2		
Social St. Studies	1	2					2	4	6	1						3	6	6		1	12	29	21	2	1		
Science	6	2	1			1	1	2								1	7	4	1		10	26	9	1	2		
Language & Literature	1						3	1					1			5	1				6	10	4				
	9	2	1			6	15	10		3		1	1			7	25	12	1	3	32	92	48	6	5	2.76*	
																										2.64*	
percentage distribution	29	92	52	12	32	100	314	310	63	31	131	12.4	21.0	5.5	11.7	11.6	11.6	35.8	7.5	3.7							

Grades for off-campus independent study average remarkably near the on-campus grades for the fall semester. The percentage of A and B grades for all students compares as follows:

	<u>Per Cent</u>
Independent Study	55.8
Campus	54.4

At the other end of the scale the percentage of D's and F's is:

Independent Study	20.2
Campus	11.2

On the scale of 4 points for a straight A average, the freshmen's grades averaged:

Independent Study	2.32
Campus	2.39

The sophomores' grades averaged:

Independent Study	2.16
Campus	2.52

The juniors' grades averaged:

Independent Study	2.66
Campus	2.76

The freshman and junior grade averages are very close, with a slight advantage to the campus grades of less than one-tenth of a point. Only the sophomore averages separate measurably, where the campus grades average over three-tenths of a point higher.

Section 8

Conclusions and Recommendations

The evaluators have reached the following conclusions:

1. The achievements of Bard freshmen, sophomores, and juniors in the 1958-59 off-campus study experiment compare favorably with on-campus achievements especially when consideration is given to the major handicap under which the experiment labored. The evaluators are confident, on the basis of this experiment, that Bard students can study independently off campus and maintain academic standards fully comparable with campus standards. Of course, the lessons learned from the year's experience must be taken into account in designing and operating future independent study programs.
2. A question in the minds of almost everyone at the beginning was whether freshmen could pursue independent study successfully off campus. There is nothing in the results of the experiment to show that freshmen are any less able to do independent study off campus than are sophomores. Freshman grades for off-campus study actually averaged slightly higher than those of the sophomores. This was true despite the fact that only a small minority of freshmen were able to enroll in organized pilot courses, whereas in the original plan of the experiment they were almost all to be placed in such courses. Perhaps the successful performance of the freshmen may be accounted for by the fact that most of the freshmen were favorably disposed toward the project and believed that they would profit from it.
3. The experiment was handicapped and seriously weakened by the lack of pilot courses especially for freshmen.
4. The experiment began under the serious handicap of an organized campus campaign to discredit it. The relative success which the experiment achieved is almost remarkable when we consider the heavy cloud which hung over it at the beginning.
5. Many students were handicapped by lack of books and study materials which were not planned for adequately in advance.
6. There ^{were} ~~are~~ not enough academically related work projects especially for sophomores and juniors who might have profited greatly by a work experience related to their academic interests.
7. The faculty was overloaded seriously with the supervision of an overwhelming number of individual conference courses.

Recommendations:

1. Off-campus independent study should be an important and integral part of any new calendar and program for Bard College.
2. Only a firm intention on the part of the college to make these opportunities available to all students who can benefit from them, accompanied by careful advance planning and organization, will preserve for Bard the valuable educational instrument of independent study. The new calendar which Bard has adopted requires for the achievement of its purpose that students accomplish at least a modest proportion of their academic work while off campus on jobs or in full-time study.
3. Sufficient faculty time should be budgeted in the fall quarter and subsequently to make possible the design and organization of an adequate number of sandwich and trailer courses. All freshmen undertaking independent study should be enrolled in appropriate organized sandwich or trailer courses. The first off-campus independent study experience for a student, even though he be a sophomore or junior, should be in an organized course unless there are special reasons for an individual project.
4. Organized courses intended for freshmen and sophomores should emphasize content primarily. Courses and individual projects involving considerable analytical-critical or creative effort should be reserved for more mature students.
5. Students need more help than the college has been able to provide heretofore in finding suitable job opportunities. The college should engage a competent person to locate job opportunities and to guide students in searching for and choosing jobs and in deriving benefit from them. With an adequate placement service, many students could be placed in academically related jobs which would be of great developmental value to them.
6. Plans should be made for the evaluation of next year's independent study. A strong faculty committee should be appointed for the purpose.

At a special meeting of the faculty of Bard College on May 18, at which the evaluators gave a preview of their report, the faculty approved unanimously the following resolution:

RESOLVED that during the 1960 winter term there be offered more numerous and more structured pilot courses readily available to freshmen in particular. There could be a number of courses or they could be presented as the Common Course. Courses should emphasize content more than creative-analytical-critical elements.

At this meeting the faculty also -

RESOLVED that for the year 1960, during each of the seven-week sessions*, there be five options available to students:

- a. attendance at the academic program of these sessions;
- b. independent off-campus study;
- c. full-time jobs, i.e., conventional field periods;
- d. academically significant jobs carrying credit;
- e. vacation, provided that vacations generally be assumed for summer unless, because of special circumstances, permission be granted by the division for summer field period work and winter vacation.

*The faculty had previously adopted a new calendar with fall and spring semesters of 15 weeks each plus two half-semester of 7 weeks each, one following the Christmas holiday and one in the summer.

The faculty also at this meeting -

RESOLVED that the faculty approve the idea of an integrated college for the winter session of 1960 dealing with several aspects of a common topic.

These faculty actions, especially the first two, are quoted here to indicate that the experiment of 1958-59 has been a necessary step toward development of the Bard College program.

The evaluators wish for Bard success in an important pioneering venture in the realm of higher education.

Submitted by the evaluators,

W. Boyd Alexander
W. Boyd Alexander

Alonso F. Myers
Alonso F. Myers

IV draft.
BARD COLLEGE
Annandale---on---Hudson
New York

Report of the Committee on the Four-Quarter Program

14 May 1958

The Committee on the Four-Quarter Plan brings to the faculty the questions on which faculty action is needed before further work can be effectively done. We should also like to give you some idea of the variety and complexity of problems which have come to light in our work.

If a pilot operation were inaugurated next year, its primary purpose would be to experiment with independent (usually off-campus) academic work. This would be done primarily through the use of the field period and would involve the adaptation of course material, before and after the field period, to the needs of independent work on the part of students. Several members of the committee did detailed work on what this would involve in their own departments and found that it would necessitate not only revision of course material but, in many cases, the consideration of course sequences -- one-semester or two-semester courses in relation to the work of the student during the off-campus period. There would also be problems in relating our present form of field period, either academic assignment or job experience, to the demands of the experimental plan; whether students with jobs could do the additional academic work; whether independent work should always be in the major field; whether some types of field period jobs would warrant academic credit. (Mr. Tremblay presented as a sample the patterns discussed by the Science Division.)

Perhaps the most important matter for faculty decision would be whether or not the whole student body and faculty should be involved in the pilot study (Discussion of pros and cons.) If the whole student body were involved, it would seem practical to the committee to require a minimum of 2 or 3 credits. (In the case of some students, this requirement might be met during the summer instead of the field period.)

One practical plan, which would involve only seniors and sophomores, would be (1) to move the date for completion of the senior project to the end of the field period. The spring semester for seniors would then include a senior divisional symposium or other patterns of work, rather than merely a continuation of the MC. (2) The use of the independent work period for sophomores as special preparation for moderation. This might be a paper, a report on specially assigned material or other forms of testing independent work.

The committee recognizes that the pilot study could be set up (1) as an experiment to be evaluated at the end of the next academic year (1958-59) and any action on adoption of the Four-Quarter Plan to be dependent on its demonstrated success; or (2) as experience in carrying out the Four-Quarter Plan to be used to revise a plan to which we

would already be committed. In deciding which of these approaches the faculty wishes to adopt, consideration should be given to the timing involved -- a decision on an experiment could not be arrived at before the fall of 1959, which would mean, the fall program, if adopted, could not be announced until then and Ford support might be forfeited. On the other hand, if not set up as a real experiment we might find ourselves with an unworkable plan to which we were formally committed. (We should like to get from the Ford Foundation their reaction to our question about the nature of the pilot study before we ask the faculty to take formal action. It is our opinion that their interest in an experimental study might be as great as in a commitment to the whole plan now.)

Many other questions have been taken up by the committee. The designing of a feasible pattern for the Four-Quarter Plan has presented the greatest problem, involving as it does the coordination of student and faculty schedules and the development of courses within the pattern. Other problems include a determination of the number of additional faculty needed; the effects of a Four-Quarter Plan on the life of the community as a community; expenses for students; compensation to faculty for extra work involved in course changes; possibilities of outside evaluation of independent work; effect on admissions. These are only samples of the questions that arise.

It was our feeling that today's faculty meeting should be limited to the making of those decisions on which future work depends, namely:

Approach to the pilot study.

All or part of students to be involved.

The use of the senior project and the sophomore moderation as specific forms for experimentation in independent work.

Dorothy Dulles Bourne
for the Committee

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Two evaluators report on the independent study experiment at Bard College during 1958-59. Presents student and faculty attitudes toward the experiment, results of the independent study as measured by grades, and conclusions and recommendations. Evaluation indicates that the achievements of freshmen, sophomores, and juniors in the 1958-59 offcampus study experiment compare favorably with oncampus activities, and that nothing in the results of the experiment showed that freshmen are any less able to do independent study ofcampus than are sophomores. Handicaps in administering the program were a lack of pilot courses, study materials, and a sufficient number of academically related work projects. In addition, the faculty was overloaded seriously with the supervision of an overwhelming number of individual conference courses.							
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Poster #4

Classroom
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Higher Education
Room 3758

"EVALUATION OF AN EXPERIMENT IN

OFF-CAMPUS INDEPENDENT STUDY

at BARD COLLEGE

1959-60

? 1958-59
(see page 2)

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE
Office of Education

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With the aid of a grant from the Fund for the
Advancement of Education

Evaluators

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the Faculty, Antioch College

and

Alonso F. Myers, Professor of Higher Education,
New York University

Conclusions and
Recommendations
appear on pages 27 and 28.

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OUTLINE OF REPORT

Section

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2. Evaluators' Functions and Responsibilities
3. Student Attitudes toward Independent Study
before Undertaking It
4. Faculty Attitudes toward Independent Study in
the Fall of 1958
5. Student Reactions to Independent Study after
Field Period
(Questionnaires; Divisional Meetings)
6. Faculty Reactions to Independent Study after
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(Questionnaires; Interviews)
7. Results of Independent Study as Measured by
Grades
8. Conclusions and Recommendations

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| A | Notes to COAR, 30 March 1959 |
| B | Pre-Field Period Questionnaire, 1 December 1958 |
| C | Report on Pre-Field Period Questionnaire |
| D | Post-Field Period Questionnaire |
| E | Faculty Evaluation, 7 March 1959 |

Section 1

Historical Preamble

On July 6, 1958, Bard College announced receipt of a grant from the Fund for the Advancement of Education for the purpose of conducting an experimental academic pilot project in the academic year 1958-59. The purpose of the project was to determine:

- (1) whether Bard students could study independently off campus and maintain Bard academic standards;
- and
- (2) whether Bard should adopt a proposed four-quarter calendar requiring off-campus independent study.

As envisioned by Bard and described in the July 6, 1958, press release, the proposed four quarter plan would have the following effects:

1. Keep the college plant in operation 12 months a year.
2. Permit the college to accommodate about twice as many resident students as its facilities would otherwise allow;
3. Increase the number of students taught by each faculty member by one-third without materially altering the system of seminars, tutorials and individual conference courses that has distinguished the Bard program for the last quarter of a century;
4. Permit able students to complete their college requirements in three years instead of four; and
5. Require independent academic work while students are not in residence.

The press statement continued:

So far as the division of the academic calendar into quarters instead of semesters is concerned, there is nothing either new or experimental, President Case said, pointing to the scores of prominent institutions in the Middle West that use such an arrangement. The requirement of independent academic work outside the resident terms, however, has never been characteristic of the American collegiate program. Although new to this country, it is a familiar feature of the English universities as "the long vac," when a substantial portion of the year's work is done.

There are many difficulties and dangers, however, in moving toward these goals without ample time for considering and solving practical questions relating to course sequences, faculty teaching patterns and student residence patterns. The Bard faculty has therefore decided to spend the better part of a year in further study and in close observation of the Pilot Project before making any commitment. In May, 1959, there will be a comprehensive evaluation of the experiment. If it is decided at that time to proceed with the Bard four-quarter system, it will be inaugurated in September, 1960, leaving more than a year to allow future students and school advisors to become fully acquainted with it. The intervening year, 1959-1960, would in this event continue the Pilot Project with such modifications or additional experimental features as the faculty deem desirable.

During the trial period the Pilot Project will have no effect on the college calendar. It will, however, introduce independent work for academic credit during the non-resident term in January and February. This requirement effects a change in Bard's annual Field Period, which has heretofore been used almost exclusively for job experience. While three successful Field Periods have been required for graduation, no academic credit has formerly been allowed for the work done.

Under the terms of the Pilot Project a student must earn from 2 to 4 academic credits by independent work in the non-resident term.

Seniors will accomplish this by doing the basic research in preparation for their Senior Project or in actually writing the Senior Project. Sophomores will have special assignments designed to prepare them for the Moderation, or Sophomore Review, required for promotion to the Upper College. All other students will be offered a number of alternatives by which they can earn the required credits. These include:

1. A significant assignment that follows a specially designed first-semester course (a "trailer" course) or is sandwiched between the two semesters of a specially designed year course (a "sandwich" course);
2. A specially assigned individual project designed to fill a particular student's academic needs;
3. A work experience plus either 1. or 2.; and
4. A special work experience evaluated in advance as possessing special academic merit. A student who elects the 4th option must make an extensive report to his Division to supplement the work experience.

Section 2

Evaluators' Functions and Responsibilities

In August, 1958, Bard arranged with the undersigned, Alonso F. Myers and W. Boyd Alexander, to serve as evaluators of the independent study experiment during 1958-59. It was agreed that in addition to their evaluative functions they would act as consultants on the operation of the experiment and, in a minor way, on other aspects of the total project.

The evaluators made six visits to the campus from September to May. Each evaluator was present on campus 18 days. In addition to three days working jointly at Maple Springs, New York, on the final report, each devoted several days to study and analysis at home.

On each visit the evaluators met with the Faculty Committee on Academic Reorganization (COAR) and on most visits with the full faculty. The evaluators met several times with the Student Committee on Educational Policy. They also met with the faculties of the four divisions: Arts, Literature, Science, Social Studies.

The September visit was devoted largely to interviewing administrators, faculty, and students to get a clear understanding of the purpose and design of the independent study experiment and the attitudes toward it of all concerned. The evaluators encouraged the faculty to move promptly and vigorously in development of the projected pilot courses.

During the October visit the evaluators, with the assistance of Professor Frank Oja of the Bard faculty, developed a questionnaire designed to determine student attitudes toward and expectations from the independent study experiment before undertaking it. There were individual and group conferences with faculty on the design and organization of independent study pilot courses and conference projects, including work projects for academic credit. There were discussions with faculty regarding the desirability of making pilot courses available to all freshmen. The decision of the faculty of the Common Course, required of all freshmen, not to provide an independent study experience associated with this course, presented a serious problem. This somewhat unexpected decision resulted in a paucity of organized pilot courses for freshmen and made it necessary for the faculty to plan for individualized conference projects with a majority of the students, including more than three-fourths of the freshmen. Formidable, indeed, were the tasks to be accomplished in the six weeks remaining in the fall quarter. After the Christmas holiday the students were to begin their field periods and independent study.

During the December visit there were discussions with faculty and with student leaders regarding standards for evaluating academic achievement in independent study projects. Although a minority of faculty members favored a policy of "leniency," it was agreed that campus academic

standards should prevail. During the visit the evaluators prepared separate questionnaires for faculty and students to obtain their evaluations of off-campus independent study. These questionnaires were to be completed as soon as practicable after college reconvened following the field period. The post-field period questionnaire for the students paralleled the pre-field period questionnaire.

A six-day visit in March was devoted largely to analysis of the questionnaires and to interviews with about a dozen of the faculty members who had significant numbers of students engaged in independent study. The evaluators attended divisional meetings of students and faculty organized by the Student Educational Policies Committee. The purpose of the meetings was to get first-hand student reactions to their off-campus independent study experiences. Faculty members and the evaluators were present as observers. The Student Educational Policies Committee had prepared a list of questions to guide discussion in the meetings. At the end of the March visit the evaluators submitted to the Committee on Academic Reorganization some tentative conclusions and recommendations. (See Appendix A.) At this time a large number of student questionnaires had not been returned.

The last visit to the campus, in May, was devoted largely to further analysis of questionnaire data, to analysis of grades given by faculty for off-campus independent study, and to comparison of these grades with grades given for campus study. The evaluators met with the Committee on Academic Reorganization for the purpose of presenting their major conclusions and recommendations. At a meeting of the entire faculty later in the day the evaluators presented their major conclusions and recommendations. At this same meeting the Committee on Academic Reorganization presented its proposals for a new calendar and program to go into effect in the academic year 1959-60, and these proposals, the first of which accepted the evaluators' recommendation on independent study, were adopted.

Section 3

Student Attitudes toward Independent Study before Undertaking It

When plans were announced by Bard College in the spring of 1958 for an experimental independent study project to be undertaken during the field period 1958-59, with a view to the possible adoption in 1960-61 of a four-quarter plan, there quickly developed bitter opposition to the proposal within the student body. Protest meetings were held for the purpose of developing and solidifying student opposition.

A questionnaire, designed to test student opinion with regard to the proposed four-quarter plan and the experimental off-campus independent study project, was developed by a committee of students and circulated to the student body. There were 108 of these questionnaires returned, representing slightly less than one-half of the student body. Student reactions as recorded on the questionnaire were highly unfavorable, both to the off-campus independent study proposal and to the idea of a four-quarter plan for Bard. For example, to the question

"If you were to choose a college, would you choose a college with such a 4-Quarter plan (which includes one quarter of independent study at home)?"

YES - 3

NO - 98

To the question

"If you had to work independently for a semester, would you rather work at home or at Bard?"

BARD - 92

HOME - 6

To the question

"Do you feel that isolation from an academic community will hinder your work?"

YES - 100

NO - 3

When the evaluators arrived at the Bard campus on September 17, 1958, for the first visit, there was clear indication of highly organized, vocal, and bitter opposition to either the experimental off-campus independent study project or the proposed four-quarter plan. It was not clear to what extent these attitudes were representative of the student body as a whole. It seemed important to ascertain the attitudes of the students and especially of the freshmen, since they had not been subjected to the organized propaganda effort in opposition to the proposals that had been carried on in the spring of 1958.

During their visit to the Bard campus in October, 1958, the evaluators, with the valuable help of Professor Frank Oja, developed a questionnaire to be completed by students and designed to determine their attitudes toward the experimental off-campus independent study project shortly before embarking on it.

Reactions were sought from freshmen, sophomores, and juniors. Seniors were not included because their independent study assignment--the Senior Project--was of quite a different nature from those to be undertaken by the other classes. There was the further fact that faculty evaluation of senior projects would not be completed until late in the academic year and thus could not be taken into account in the evaluation of the experimental off-campus independent study project.

A rather detailed report and analysis of the questionnaires turned in by Bard students in December, 1958, is included as Appendix C of this report. Some of the most significant findings resulting from the analysis of the questionnaires are reported here.

(1) FRESHMEN vs. UPPERCLASSMEN:

The freshmen were markedly more favorable in their expressed attitudes toward the experimental off-campus independent study project than were the sophomores and the juniors.

Comparison in terms of liking or disliking

80 per cent of the freshmen expected either to like very much or to like the independent study project.

16+ per cent expressed themselves as neutral.

3+ expected to dislike it.

Among the sophomores, only
50 per cent expected either to like it very much or to like it.

Among the juniors, only
47 per cent expected either to like it very much or to like it.

Comparison in terms of anticipated value

79 per cent of the freshmen anticipated that the independent study project would be either more valuable than or about equal in value to a classroom course.

Among the sophomores, only
54 per cent anticipated that independent study would be either more valuable than or about equal to a classroom course.

Among the juniors,
72 per cent anticipated that independent study would be either more valuable than or about equal to a classroom course.

Why did the freshmen express markedly greater liking for the prospect of entering upon the independent study project than did the sophomores and slightly more than the juniors?

It appears probable that the freshmen, being newly arrived on the campus in September, 1958, had not been indoctrinated against the project as had those students who were on campus in the spring of 1958. It may also be true that freshmen are generally more favorably disposed toward innovations than are upperclassmen.

Still another plausible explanation of the difference in attitudes is that the freshmen had not been on campus long enough to become as satisfied with Bard as were the upperclassmen.

Many of the comments written in by the sophomores and the juniors stated a deep aversion to the idea of being under the necessity of studying at home during the field period. One or two years of living away from home apparently had quite thoroughly emancipated the upperclassmen from home ties. The freshmen, on the other hand, appeared to be less apprehensive over the baneful effects of having to live and study at home for several weeks.

(2) CHANGE IN ATTITUDES OF SOPHOMORES AND JUNIORS BETWEEN SPRING OF 1958 AND DECEMBER, 1958.

The "Student Opinion" questionnaire submitted by a committee of students in the spring of 1958 showed an overwhelming opposition to the idea of off-campus independent study. The preponderance of expressed opposition to off-campus independent study as reported in the student opinion questionnaire ranges from about 15 to 1 to better than 20 to 1. Even allowing for the somewhat loaded nature of the questions, the magnitude of the opposition is impressive.

The analysis of student questionnaires filled out in December, 1958, shows a sharp reversal from the results recorded in the student opinion questionnaire in the spring of 1958. Leaving out of account the freshman questionnaires submitted in December, 1958, since the freshmen were not at Bard in the spring of 1958, the analysis of questionnaires filled out by sophomores and juniors in December, 1958, shows a sharp reversal from the spring of 1958 student opinion survey.

Fifty per cent of the sophomores stated that they either like very much or like the independent study project on which they were about to engage. An additional 20 per cent of the sophomores stated that they were neutral, leaving only 30 per cent stating that they disliked it or were undecided.

Among the juniors, the reactions were not greatly different from those recorded by the sophomores: 47 per cent of the juniors said that they either liked very much or liked the independent study projects on which they were about to engage; 31+ per cent said they were neutral, leaving only 21 per cent who said they disliked it.

On the important matter of anticipated value of the off-campus independent study project as a learning experience, 54 per cent of the sophomores believed the independent study project would be either more valuable or about on a par with a classroom course.

Among the juniors, 72 per cent believed the independent study project would be either more valuable than or about on a par with a classroom course.

Why did this sharp reversal from the student opinions expressed in the spring of 1958 occur? It appears probable that the opportunity to think about this matter during the summer, with an absence of an emotionalized propagandistic effort to discredit the entire proposal, may have resulted in considerable independent thinking about independent study.

Contributing to the reversal in all probability was a change in the situation with regard to the independent study project between spring and fall of 1958. In the spring students were being urged to exert every effort to defeat the proposal. When they returned to the campus in September it was clear that there would be an experimental off-campus independent study project during the field period and that all students would be required to participate in it. Attention now shifted from the effort to defeat the proposal to consideration by the individual as to what particular project he should undertake and what values there might be for him. Some students now saw certain merits in the idea. Some, after consultation with their advisers, became aware of challenging opportunities for a different kind of academic experience and saw an opportunity to prove their ability to study independently.

Section 4

Faculty Attitudes toward Independent Study in the Fall of 1958 before Field Period

The evaluators ascertained faculty opinion by means of (1) meetings with the Committee on Academic Reorganization, (2) divisional meetings, (3) discussion with the dean, and (4) informal interviews and casual contacts with individual faculty members.

Faculty attitudes toward off-campus independent study were subordinate to their attitudes toward the proposed four-quarter calendar. Most faculty members liked the existing Bard calendar with its eight-week winter interlude (two weeks Christmas vacation plus six weeks field period for students), and viewed with more or less dislike the possibility of losing their winter period for recreation, study and travel. Several said that this feature of the Bard program was the most attractive one for them. In discussion with faculty of their views, attitudes, suggestions and predictions about the off-campus independent study experiment, many tended to regard it with reserve because, if adjudged successful, the consequence would be the adoption of the four-quarter plan. Several said that, if they became convinced that the adoption of the four-quarter plan was necessary for Bard's survival, they would vote for it but would probably seek to leave Bard soon afterward.

Unfamiliarity with quarter plans of any sort was quite general and seemed to play some part in the negative attitudes. The semester plan, almost universally used in the eastern part of the country, was regarded as proved in practice and soundly grounded on long tradition. Changing pace from a fifteen-week academic period to eleven or twelve weeks presented difficulties of varying degrees to many faculty members.

Much more basic and important, though, in faculty attitudes was the conviction that any plan, whether it might be off-campus independent study or academic credit by achievement examination, would dilute Bard's program of individualized study based on close and frequent student-faculty contacts and would gnaw at the very roots of Bard's unique excellence as an academic institution.

Faculty attitudes toward the values and feasibility of off-campus independent study, insofar as they were separable from the four-quarter plan, reflected both interest and skepticism but little of either enthusiasm or hostility.

The evaluators found little enthusiasm for the independent study idea though a considerable minority of faculty members, mostly those with longer service, was hopeful that the experiment would prove to be academically acceptable.

Deep concern for the survival of the college compelled this wish more than any conviction that independent study would add another valuable dimension to the Bard program. There was little feeling expressed that students would profit by being forced to work on their own for periods of time without frequent faculty assistance and supervision.

However, since it had been decided to proceed with the off-campus independent study experiment, the faculty proposed to give the experiment a fair chance. Much time was spent in the fall, in groups and individually, in designing pilot project courses which originally were supposed to provide independent study opportunities for most of the freshmen and sophomores. When the decision of the Common Course faculty not to enter the experiment required that the great majority of the students, including the freshmen, would need to have planned with them individualized conference courses, a great and unexpected additional load was thrown unequally upon members of the faculty. Planning such projects in numbers, including helping the students to prepare syllabi and bibliographies and devising ways to measure achievement, led faculty members into strange territory. Their after judgment was that in almost all cases they had been able to work out adequate plans with students though the students' judgment was much less positive on that score.

It should be emphasized that a great deal of hard and committed work was done by everyone. But all concerned were necessarily tentative and somewhat doubtful about the design and conduct of the off-campus independent study for the simple reason that they had had no experience with such a program.

Section 5Student Reactions to Independent Study after Field Period

When students returned to the campus for the beginning of the second semester, following the completion of the field period, they were asked to give their reactions to the independent study projects on which they had been engaged and to evaluate their experiences with independent study. A copy of the questionnaire that the students filled out for this purpose is included as Appendix D.

In the post-field period questionnaire, students were asked to record their reaction in terms of liking or disliking their independent study experience. They also were asked to give their evaluation of the independent study projects in which they had engaged in terms of value to them as a learning experience. The following tables summarize student reactions and evaluations on these two items, arranged by classes, and present for comparative purposes the reaction to the same two items before engaging in the independent study projects.

Extent of Liking or Disliking

Analysis of Reactions by Freshmen	Pre-Field Period		Post-Field Period	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
Like very much	24	44.44	14	36.84
Like	19	35.19	12	31.58
Neutral	9	16.67	5	13.16
Dislike	2	3.70	7	18.42
Total	54	100.00	38	100.00
Analysis of Reactions by Sophomores	Pre-Field Period		Post-Field Period	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
Like very much	10	22.73	5	19.23
Like	12	27.27	8	30.77
Neutral	9	20.45	6	23.08
Dislike	10	22.73	7	26.92
Undecided	3	6.82	-	-
Total	44	100.00	26	100.00

Analysis of Reactions
by Juniors

	Pre-Field Period		Post-Field Period	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
Like very much	1	5.26	5	16.13
Like	8	42.11	8	25.81
Neutral	6	31.58	7	22.58
Dislike	4	21.05	11	35.48
Total	19	100.00	31	100.00

Analysis of
Reactions
Freshmen, Sophomores, Juniors

	Pre-Field Period		Post-Field Period	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Percent
Like very much	35	29.91	24	25.26
Like	39	33.33	28	29.47
Neutral	24	20.51	18	18.95
Dislike	16	13.68	25	26.32
Undecided	3	2.57	-	-
Total	117	100.00	95	100.00

After completion of the experimental off-campus independent study 54.73 per cent of all students who turned in questionnaires indicated either that they liked very much or that they liked it. This compares with 63.24 per cent who had indicated that they expected to like it very much or to like it. A clear majority had expected to like it and did like it.

Just as there was a decline in the percentage liking the experience with independent study as compared with those who had expected to like it, there was an increase in the percentage disliking it as compared with those who had expected to dislike it (26.32 per cent disliking vs. 13.68 per cent who had expected to dislike it).

In the pre-field period questionnaire returns, 20.51 per cent had declared themselves to be neutral as regards their expectations for liking or disliking the independent study experience. Perhaps to this number there should be added the 2.57 per cent who had indicated that they were undecided. At the end of the experiment 18.95 per cent indicated that they were neutral with regard to liking or disliking their experience with independent study.

Value of Independent Study as a Learning Experience

Analysis of Evaluations by Freshmen	Pre-Field Period		Post-Field Period	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
More valuable than classroom course	15	31.25	10	26.32
About on a par with classroom course	23	47.91	20	52.63
Less value than classroom course	5	10.42	3	7.89
Little value	5	10.42	4	10.53
Waste of Time	0	0	1	2.63
Total	48	100.00	38	100.00

Analysis of Evaluations by Sophomores	Pre-Field Period		Post-Field Period	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
More valuable than classroom course	7	21.21	8	21.05
About on a par with classroom course	11	33.33	11	28.95
Less value than classroom course	2	6.06	15	39.47
Little value	10	30.30	4	10.53
Waste of time	3	9.09	0	0
Total	33	100.00	38	100.00

Analysis of Evaluations by Juniors	Pre-Field Period		Post-Field Period	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
More valuable than classroom course	2	11.11	3	10.71
About on a par with classroom course	11	61.11	9	32.15
Less value than classroom course	0	0	8	28.57
Little value	5	27.78	7	25.00
Waste of time	0	0	1	3.57
Total	18	100.00	28	100.00

Analysis of Evaluations: Freshmen, Sophomores, Juniors	Pre-Field Period		Post-Field Period	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
More valuable than classroom course	24	24.00	21	20.20
About on a par with classroom course	46	46.00	40	38.46
Less value than classroom course	7	7.00	26	25.00
Little value	20	20.00	15	14.42
Waste of time	3	3.00	2	1.92
Total	100	100.00	104	100.00

After completion of their off-campus independent study projects, 58.66 per cent of all students who turned in questionnaires indicated either that the independent study project on which they had been engaged was more valuable than a classroom course or that it was about on a par with a classroom course. This compares with 70 per cent who had indicated either that they expected it to be more valuable than a classroom course or about on a par with a classroom course. On the other hand, only 16.34 per cent found the independent study experience to be either of little value (14.42 per cent) or a waste of time (1.92 per cent). This compares with 23 per cent who indicated that they expected the independent study experience to be either of little value (20 per cent) or a waste of time (3 per cent).

On the basis of the students' own evaluation of their experience in the experimental off-campus independent study project, it is clear that the results were considered to be quite satisfactory. A majority (54.73 per cent) of all students who turned in questionnaires indicated either that they liked very much or liked the independent study experience. Perhaps more significant is the fact that 58.66 per cent judged their independent study experience to have been either more valuable than a classroom course or about on a par with a classroom course.

Freshmen, who from the beginning had viewed the experimental off-campus independent study project more favorably than did the sophomores and the juniors, continued to do so after completing the independent study project. Why this should be so has been a matter of considerable interest to the evaluators as well as to some members of the faculty.

It appears probable that the fact that the freshmen had not been on campus in the spring of 1958, when the entire project was under attack by a good many student leaders, may have been an important consideration. It also seems probable that attitude toward the project in advance may have been an important factor in influencing attitudes toward it when the project was being undertaken.

Some additional facts which students reported are summarized below.

The students reported that about one-third were employed full time in the field period; about one-third part time; and about one third did not have a job.

About five-sixths of them lived at home during the field period.

About two-thirds reported some difficulty with their independent study. The largest number by far complained that it was difficult to study at home. Other difficulties reported in significant numbers were (1) books and readings were hard to obtain, (2) jobs did not allow them enough study time, (3) difficulties were encountered in their study when they needed the help of the instructor.

About one-third of the students reported that they were inadequately prepared to undertake their field study, but few criticized the faculty on this account.

A somewhat general criticism of the field period was that students needed more help to find jobs in the first place and to find jobs appropriate to their interests. Some students who had full-time jobs which interfered with their study--either because of the long hours of work and commuting or because the job was unrelated to their interests--complained that they had to take the particular job because of their need of money.

Section 6

Faculty Reactions to Independent Study after Field Period

Faculty reactions were obtained in four ways: (1) by a questionnaire (See Appendix E); (2) by interviews with thirteen faculty members who had significant numbers of students in independent study; (3) by discussions with the Committee on Academic Reorganization; and (4) by discussions with the dean.

Faculty Questionnaire Data

Questionnaires were turned in by thirty-four faculty members:

Arts Division	7
Social Studies Division	12
Science Division	7
Language and Literature Division	8

The total number of teaching faculty members on campus at the time was about 40, so that about 85 per cent returned questionnaires. Most of those who did not make a return had no independent study students.

The faculty returns covered the following classification of students by classes and types of independent study:

Total number in pilot (structured) courses: 70

		<u>Arts</u>	<u>Social Studies</u>	<u>Science</u>	<u>Language & Literature</u>
Freshmen	18	1	9	2	6
Sophomores	37	1	13	1	22
Juniors	<u>15</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>3</u>
	70	4	22	13	31

Total number in Conference Courses: 125

Freshmen	69	20	21		20
Sophomores	31	6	20		0
Juniors	<u>26</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>
	126	32	53	18	23

Total number in Work Projects: 14

Freshmen	10	2	5	0	3
Sophomores	4	0	4	0	0
Juniors	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
	14	2	9	0	3

Total number of students reported on by faculty in questionnaires: 210

Freshmen	97
Sophomores	72
Juniors	<u>41</u>
	210

SEE APPENDIX A: Notes to COAR on the Independent Study Experiment-
 "incomplete and tentative"
 by W. Boyd Alexander and Alonzo F. Myers,
 evaluators.

A few cases were added later which makes the final figures differ slightly.

The first point to be made here is that only 18 out of 97 freshmen were in organized pilot courses, whereas the original plan had presupposed that most, if not all, freshmen would be in such courses. Only slightly more than half the sophomores, 37 out of 72, were in pilot courses; 15 out of 41 juniors were in pilot courses.

No one had foreseen the possibility that more than 80 per cent of the freshmen and almost half the sophomores would turn up in conference courses. At this juncture the whole venture was in grave danger. The faculty deserves great credit for the way it faced this crisis and buckled down to setting up conference courses for such an overwhelming number of freshmen and sophomores.

Faculty Evaluation of Work as
Compared with Campus Standards

		<u>Superior</u>	<u>Same</u>	<u>Inferior</u>
PILOT COURSES	Arts	2	0	1
	Social Studies	0	10	5
	Science	0	13	0
	Language and Literature	5	14	17
		<u>7</u> +	<u>37</u> =44	<u>23</u>
CONFERENCE COURSES	Arts	3	8	10 (6**)
	Social Studies	0	7	33 (8**)
	Science	6	7	3
	Language and Literature	0	3	24
		<u>9</u> +	<u>25</u> =34	<u>70</u> (14**)
WORK PROJECTS	Arts	0	0	0
	Social Studies	8	1	0
	Science	0	0	0
	Language and Literature	0	2	0
		<u>8</u> +	<u>3</u> =11	<u>0</u>
COMBINED TOTALS		24 +	65=89	93

**only
slightly in-
ferior

The table shows that faculty felt that campus standards of quality were well maintained in the pilot courses with 44 rating quality equal or superior to campus standards against 23 rating it inferior. This constitutes a 2 to 1 vote that campus standards were maintained in organized pilot courses. There were only 18 freshmen compared to 52 sophomores and juniors in these courses.

The big swing to the negative in quality comes in the conference courses where the freshmen were heavily in the majority, 59 versus 56 sophomores and juniors combined. Here the vote is 2 to 1 the other way, i.e., that campus standards were not met. While 14 out of the 70 inferior ratings were accompanied by special notes by faculty that they were only slightly inferior, this fact only slightly mitigates the definitely unfavorable judgment.

(Because several faculty members made a special point of mentioning that certain ratings meant only slightly inferior, the evaluators were at first inclined to split these between equal and inferior, and did so in their March 30 report, but then decided that they would be following a more safely objective course by letting them all stand as inferior.)

The 11 work projects were almost all in Social Studies, and all were rated superior or equal to campus standards in quality of work done.

The total of superior and equal ratings for all projects compared to inferior comes out 89 versus 92, a very slight margin, on the inferior side with no allowance for the 14 qualified inferior ratings. Interpretation of these ratings leads onto shaky ground.

Faculty members usually maintain that they expect only a minority of students to do work inferior to campus standards. If so, then the summation is heavily on the negative side. However, the nearly even vote might be considered to mean that the quality in all types of courses came close to campus standards.

Faculty Evaluation of Quantity of Work
as compared with Campus Standards

Freshmen, Sophomores and Juniors combined.

		<u>More</u>	<u>Equal</u>	<u>Less</u>
PILOT COURSES	Arts	0	2	3
	Social Studies	6	5	4
	Science	0	12	0
	Language and Literature	8	13	16
		<u>14</u> +	<u>32</u> = 46	<u>23</u>
CONFERENCE COURSES	Arts	2	20	6
	Social Studies	4	10	36 (13**)
	Science	1	8	1
	Language and Literature	0	20	25
		<u>7</u> +	<u>58</u> = 65	<u>68</u> (13**)
WORK PROJECTS	Arts	1	0	1
	Social Studies	0	0	0
	Science	0	0	0
	Language and Literature	0	0	0
		<u>1</u> +	<u>0</u> = 1	<u>1</u>
COMBINED TOTALS		22 +	90-112	92

**only
slightly less

Faculty judgment on the comparison with campus standards of quantity of work done was 2 to 1 that campus standards were met in the pilot courses and about 1 to 1 that they were met in the individual conference courses. The standard suggested in the questionnaire was 90 hours of work for 2 semester hours. There were several faculty comments to the effect that this was higher than the campus norm. The totals of ratings of more and equal compared to less were 112 versus 92. Included in the latter figure were 13 ratings noted as only slightly less.

Faculty were asked the question, "Did you observe an appreciable difference between the ability of freshmen and sophomores or juniors to do independent work required by the course?"

	Observed an appreciable difference between freshmen vs. sophomores- juniors		Sophomores & Juniors <u>Superior</u>	Fresh- men <u>Superior</u>
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>		
PILOT COURSES	7	27	5	2
CONFERENCE COURSES	45	24	34	6

The faculty noted few differences between freshmen and sophomores-juniors in ability to do independent work in the pilot courses but noted a significant number of differences between them in the conference courses, with the sophomores-juniors rated as superior in a ratio of about 6 to 1. This comparison is worthy of special note and will be referred to in the conclusions and recommendations.

Faculty were asked about both pilot and conference courses whether the requirements were primarily content, critical-analytical, or creative. The replies are tabulated below:

	<u>Content</u>	<u>Critical-Analytical</u>	<u>Creative</u>
Arts	10	3	16
Social Studies	26	24	4
Science	20	5	0
Language & Literature	13	48	0

The critical-analytical courses are heavily in the majority in the Language and Literature Division and are almost equal to the content courses in Social Studies. It is significant that faculty members in these divisions report a large proportion of the conference course performance as inferior in quality.

Faculty Interviews

The evaluators interviewed 13 faculty members. An effort was made to select those who had had larger numbers of students in independent study. Time did not permit covering all of them. Fortunately in several such cases the faculty members had written very full comments on their questionnaires.

The evaluators tried to determine whether and to what extent campus academic standards were maintained in giving grades to students for independent study. There was a split among the faculty on this important point. The majority, about three-fourths, stoutly maintained that they had not shaded their grades. Three faculty members said they had exercised leniency and another who had not done so believed that several others in his division, Social Studies, had done so. One Social Studies faculty member made the firmly blunt statement that he doubted whether any of the grades given for independent study were up to campus standards.

There was general agreement that carefully designed courses with fully worked-out syllabi should be made available to all freshmen and to a majority of sophomores and that it was regrettable that so few pilot courses were available to freshmen.

Also, there was general agreement that content rather than critical-analytical material should have primary emphasis in independent study courses to be done off campus. The teachers were aware of many cases where the students in critical-analytical courses were stuck at a certain point for lack of faculty help. The social studies and literature teachers especially emphasized this point.

There was a difference in opinion, about evenly divided, on the students' ability to do creative work independently. Several faculty members reported excellent results, while others felt the students were lost without their help and criticism.

Several teachers expressed strongly the opinion that students would be able to do better work independently in sandwich or trailer courses where they had some foundation and momentum than in starting on new material.

About half of the teachers expressed themselves as both surprised and gratified by the quality of work their students had been able to do independently. A majority expressed confidence that off-campus independent study could be successful even for the younger student if well organized content courses were made available to them.

Several teachers were impressed by the need for students to learn to work without constant guidance and prodding and could see value to those students, even some who had had difficulties, in the confidence and initiative they had developed in surmounting problems and difficulties by their own efforts.

Teachers emphasized that most of the failure grades they had to give in independent study courses were for cases where the student, for reasons good or ill, did not finish and, in many cases did not even start the work of the course. They knew of a number of cases where illness, home conditions, or demands of the job more or less justified the student's failure to tackle the work. The registrar's office reported to the evaluators that there were only four "earned" F's among the 32 that were given.

Section 7Results of Independent Study as Measured by Grades

The table below shows the distribution of the grades for off-campus independent study by classes and divisions compared with the grades earned on campus by the same students in the fall semester. Previously note was made of the fact that only four students out of the 32 who received F grades (failure) for independent study actually finished the work of the course. No withdrawn or incomplete grades were given. The campus grades for the same students show a considerable number of withdrawn grades which probably were given for some sort of shown cause. No such tempering of the grade-wind was done for the off-campus grades, for the simple reason that the students were not on campus to show cause.

TABLE OF RESULTS OF INDEPENDENT STUDY AS MEASURED BY GRADES

	Pilot Courses					Conference Courses					Work Projects					All Courses					First semester grades for same students					average grades
	A B C D F					A B C D F					A B C D F					A B C D F					A B C D F					
Freshmen	1	1	1	1	1	3	0	5	3	2	1	1	1	4	10	6	3	4	9	54	55	6	2	2.39*		
Arts																										
Social Studies	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	4	1	1	3	2	2	4	13	7	1	2	8	35	49	13	8			
Science	1	1	1	1	1	4	4	1	1	1				4	5	1	1	2	10	17	13	2	2			
Language & Literature	1	3	2			1	9	5	1	4	1			1	10	9	1	6	10	53	49	12	7			
	3	5	5			9	32	15	6	8	4	3	3	13	38	23	6	14	37	159	166	33	19	2.32*		
Sophomores	3	1	1	1	1	2	6	4		2				2	9	5	0	3	5	36	22	5	1	2.52*		
Arts																										
Social Studies	1	2	2	1		1	9	4	2	2	1	2	2	3	13	8	3	2	13	43	40	8	4			
Science	1					2	1			2				2	2			2	3	13	3	4	4			
Language & Literature	3	4	2	8							2	3	4	2	8	2	3	4	10	31	31	7	2			
	9	7	3	9		5	16	8	2	6	1	2	2	9	29	17	5	15	31	123	96	24	7	2.16*		
Juniors																								2.76*		
Arts																										
Social St. Studies	1	2				2	4	6		1				3	6	6		1	12	29	21	2	1			
Science	6	2	1			1	1	2			1	7	4	1		7	4	1	10	26	9	1	2			
Language & Literature	1	9	2	1		3	1				5	5	1		7	25	12	1	3	6	10	4	5			
	1	9	2	1		6	15	10		3	1	1	1	7	25	12	1	3	32	92	118	6	5	2.64*		
Percentage Distribution	29	92	52	12	32	100	314	310	63	31	134	12.1	21.0	5.5	11.7	11.6	11.4	35.8	7.5	3.7						

Grades for off-campus independent study average remarkably near the on-campus grades for the fall semester. The percentage of A and B grades for all students compares as follows:

	<u>Per Cent</u>
Independent Study	55.8
Campus	54.4

At the other end of the scale the percentage of D's and F's is:

Independent Study	20.2
Campus	11.2

On the scale of 4 points for a straight A average, the freshmen's grades averaged:

Independent Study	2.32
Campus	2.39

The sophomores' grades averaged:

Independent Study	2.16
Campus	2.52

The juniors' grades averaged:

Independent Study	2.66
Campus	2.76

The freshman and junior grade averages are very close, with a slight advantage to the campus grades of less than one-tenth of a point. Only the sophomore averages separate measurably, where the campus grades average over three-tenths of a point higher.

Section 8

Conclusions and Recommendations

The evaluators have reached the following conclusions:

1. The achievements of Bard freshmen, sophomores, and juniors in the 1958-59 off-campus study experiment compare favorably with on-campus achievements especially when consideration is given to the major handicap under which the experiment labored. The evaluators are confident, on the basis of this experiment, that Bard students can study independently off campus and maintain academic standards fully comparable with campus standards. Of course, the lessons learned from the year's experience must be taken into account in designing and operating future independent study programs.
2. A question in the minds of almost everyone at the beginning was whether freshmen could pursue independent study successfully off campus. There is nothing in the results of the experiment to show that freshmen are any less able to do independent study off campus than are sophomores. Freshman grades for off-campus study actually averaged slightly higher than those of the sophomores. This was true despite the fact that only a small minority of freshmen were able to enroll in organized pilot courses, whereas in the original plan of the experiment they were almost all to be placed in such courses. Perhaps the successful performance of the freshmen may be accounted for by the fact that most of the freshmen were favorably disposed toward the project and believed that they would profit from it.
3. The experiment was handicapped and seriously weakened by the lack of pilot courses especially for freshmen.
4. The experiment began under the serious handicap of an organized campus campaign to discredit it. The relative success which the experiment achieved is almost remarkable when we consider the heavy cloud which hung over it at the beginning.
5. Many students were handicapped by lack of books and study materials which were not planned for adequately in advance.
6. There ^{were} ~~are~~ not enough academically related work projects especially for sophomores and juniors who might have profited greatly by a work experience related to their academic interests.
7. The faculty was overloaded seriously with the supervision of an overwhelming number of individual conference courses.

Recommendations:

1. Off-campus independent study should be an important and integral part of any new calendar and program for Bard College.
2. Only a firm intention on the part of the college to make these opportunities available to all students who can benefit from them, accompanied by careful advance planning and organization, will preserve for Bard the valuable educational instrument of independent study. The new calendar which Bard has adopted requires for the achievement of its purpose that students accomplish at least a modest proportion of their academic work while off campus on jobs or in full-time study.
3. Sufficient faculty time should be budgeted in the fall quarter and subsequently to make possible the design and organization of an adequate number of sandwich and trailer courses. All freshmen undertaking independent study should be enrolled in appropriate organized sandwich or trailer courses. The first off-campus independent study experience for a student, even though he be a sophomore or junior, should be in an organized course unless there are special reasons for an individual project.
4. Organized courses intended for freshmen and sophomores should emphasize content primarily. Courses and individual projects involving considerable analytical-critical or creative effort should be reserved for more mature students.
5. Students need more help than the college has been able to provide heretofore in finding suitable job opportunities. The college should engage a competent person to locate job opportunities and to guide students in searching for and choosing jobs and in deriving benefit from them. With an adequate placement service, many students could be placed in academically related jobs which would be of great developmental value to them.
6. Plans should be made for the evaluation of next year's independent study. A strong faculty committee should be appointed for the purpose.

At a special meeting of the faculty of Bard College on May 18, at which the evaluators gave a preview of their report, the faculty approved unanimously the following resolution:

RESOLVED that during the 1960 winter term there be offered more numerous and more structured pilot courses readily available to freshmen in particular. There could be a number of courses or they could be presented as the Common Course. Courses should emphasize content more than creative-analytical-critical elements.

At this meeting the faculty also -

RESOLVED that for the year 1960, during each of the seven-week sessions*, there be five options available to students:

- a. attendance at the academic program of these sessions;
- b. independent off-campus study;
- c. full-time jobs, i.e., conventional field periods;
- d. academically significant jobs carrying credit;
- e. vacation, provided that vacations generally be assumed for summer unless, because of special circumstances, permission be granted by the division for summer field period work and winter vacation.

*The faculty had previously adopted a new calendar with fall and spring semesters of 15 weeks each plus two half-semesters of 7 weeks each, one following the Christmas holiday and one in the summer.

The faculty also at this meeting -

RESOLVED that the faculty approve the idea of an integrated college for the winter session of 1960 dealing with several aspects of a common topic.

These faculty actions, especially the first two, are quoted here to indicate that the experiment of 1958-59 has been a necessary step toward development of the Bard College program.

The evaluators wish for Bard success in an important pioneering venture in the realm of higher education.

Submitted by the evaluators,

W. Boyd Alexander
W. Boyd Alexander

Alonso F. Myers
Alonso F. Myers

IV draft.

BARD COLLEGE
Annandale---on---Hudson
New York

Report of the Committee on the Four-Quarter Program

14 May 1958

The Committee on the Four-Quarter Plan brings to the faculty the questions on which faculty action is needed before further work can be effectively done. We should also like to give you some idea of the variety and complexity of problems which have come to light in our work.

If a pilot operation were inaugurated next year, its primary purpose would be to experiment with independent (usually off-campus) academic work. This would be done primarily through the use of the field period and would involve the adaptation of course material, before and after the field period, to the needs of independent work on the part of students. Several members of the committee did detailed work on what this would involve in their own departments and found that it would necessitate not only revision of course material but, in many cases, the consideration of course sequences -- one-semester or two-semester courses in relation to the work of the student during the off-campus period. There would also be problems in relating our present form of field period, either academic assignment or job experience, to the demands of the experimental plan; whether students with jobs could do the additional academic work; whether independent work should always be in the major field; whether some types of field period jobs would warrant academic credit. (Mr. Tremblay presented as a sample the patterns discussed by the Science Division.)

Perhaps the most important matter for faculty decision would be whether or not the whole student body and faculty should be involved in the pilot study (Discussion of pros and cons.) If the whole student body were involved, it would seem practical to the committee to require a minimum of 2 or 3 credits. (In the case of some students, this requirement might be met during the summer instead of the field period.)

One practical plan, which would involve only seniors and sophomores, would be (1) to move the date for completion of the senior project to the end of the field period. The spring semester for seniors would then include a senior divisional symposium or other patterns of work, rather than merely a continuation of the MC. (2) The use of the independent work period for sophomores as special preparation for moderation. This might be a paper, a report on specially assigned material or other forms of testing independent work.

The committee recognizes that the pilot study could be set up (1) as an experiment to be evaluated at the end of the next academic year (1958-59) and any action on adoption of the Four-Quarter Plan to be dependent on its demonstrated success; or (2) as experience in carrying out the Four-Quarter Plan to be used to revise a plan to which we

would already be committed. In deciding which of these approaches the faculty wishes to adopt, consideration should be given to the timing involved -- a decision on an experiment could not be arrived at before the fall of 1959, which would mean, the fall program, if adopted, could not be announced until then and Ford support might be forfeited. On the other hand, if not set up as a real experiment we might find ourselves with an unworkable plan to which we were formally committed. (We should like to get from the Ford Foundation their reaction to our question about the nature of the pilot study before we ask the faculty to take formal action. It is our opinion that their interest in an experimental study might be as great as in a commitment to the whole plan now.)

Many other questions have been taken up by the committee. The designing of a feasible pattern for the Four-Quarter Plan has presented the greatest problem, involving as it does the coordination of student and faculty schedules and the development of courses within the pattern. Other problems include a determination of the number of additional faculty needed; the effects of a Four-Quarter Plan on the life of the community as a community; expenses for students; compensation to faculty for extra work involved in course changes; possibilities of outside evaluation of independent work; effect on admissions. These are only samples of the questions that arise.

It was our feeling that today's faculty meeting should be limited to the making of those decisions on which future work depends, namely:

Approach to the pilot study.

All or part of students to be involved.

The use of the senior project and the sophomore moderation as specific forms for experimentation in independent work.

Dorothy Dulles Bourne
for the Committee